

VZCZCXRO7213
OO RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #1950/01 3431334
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 091334Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9486
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001950

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
DEPARTMENT PASS NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: RIZEIGAT LEADER: PLANNING FOR A BAGGARA ALLIANCE

¶1. (SBU) On December 6 CDA met with Waleed Madibbo, head of a local governance NGO and nephew of Rizeigat Nazir Said Madibbo. Speaking of his uncle, who has struggled to keep his tribe relatively neutral and above the fray encapsulating Darfur, Madibbo said that he was "honest, influential, but without initiative." Native administration in Darfur was becoming emasculated, he charged. The government had the reverse problem; it was effective, but had no popular representation. The combination resulted in a power vacuum on the ground with the possibility of a "new phase" in Darfur's conflict with the potential entry of South Darfur's largest tribe entering the fray - on both sides' - the GOS and some rebel movements.

BOTTOM UP APPROACH AND ALLIANCE OF THE BAGGARA

¶2. (SBU) Madibbo, who had requested to meet CDA to discuss potential projects, said he was having difficulty securing permission from the South Darfur wali to hold a proposed reconciliation conference. (Note: Madibbo, with OTI funding, held a traditional equestrian festival and conference in Ed Daein earlier this year, bringing together Arab tribes - and boosting his own political support - from throughout the area. End note.) He had been meeting with armed groups, native administration and elites, he said, but the native administration was the least interested of all in his ideas. "We need to create a bottom-up approach," he said. Agreeing with the importance of this, CDA noted that the government would undoubtedly find this type of approach terrifying.

¶3. (SBU) Key was the creation of a Baggara/Massalit/Fur triangle, Madibbo said. The true criminals were those who had ordered the crimes in Darfur (the "idea brokers"), more so than those who had killed (the janjaweed themselves). CDA noted that Arab tribes in Darfur were victims of the government, and would ultimately get nothing from Khartoum (as the Misseriya didn't, who had fought the government's proxy war against the Dinka). Musa Hilal understood that he was also a victim, Madibbo said. Hilal was enthusiastic about Madibbo's plan to hold a strategic meeting bringing the Baggara, Massalit and Fur together, Madibbo said, though Hilal would not "extend his arms to the Zaghawa;" CDA cautioned that the Zaghawa must not be left out because of their military muscle.

¶4. (SBU) Madibbo also noted that Darfuris and southerners were realizing that they must move beyond bitterness, or else they would all fall victim to the "jallaba" - the tiny minority of power brokers in Khartoum who rules Sudan. "The U.S. needs to promote relations between Darfuris and southerners," he said. CDA agreed, as long as it did not detract from the Sirte peace negotiations. Again raising the idea of a Baggara alliance, Medibbo assured CDA that such an alliance would not harm the "zurga" (a derogatory term used for non-Arabs, it literally means "the blue ones"). CDA said that the idea was favorable, and that it could help restore the torn traditional social fabric in Darfur. CDA also cautioned Madibbo, saying that if the Baggara allied themselves, the central government would likely suddenly take a pro-Zaghawa stance. "You're playing a

dangerous game," he said. Madibbo urged the CDA to "build up" his idea of a Baggara alliance. CDA warned him that with too much obvious U.S. support, the project would undoubtedly lose credibility, but offered to gingerly explore the sensitive subject in his upcoming visit to Nyala.

U.S. NOT TAKING SIDES

15. (SBU) "We're realists," CDA said, stating that the U.S. almost always chose the relatively stable option to the unknown. The Sudanese regime harbored two false impressions of the U.S., he said - one camp was convinced that the U.S. wanted to overthrow the Khartoum regime, and the other, equally incorrect view was that the U.S. wanted the regime to remain in power and maintain stability at all costs. Neither was true. The U.S. would neither try to topple nor to save the regime, CDA continued. He cited the example of Yugoslavia, where the central government's own policies made it necessary for the U.S. to support Kosovan independence. "We prefer unity, but we're not going to take either side," he said.

16. (SBU) If the violence in Darfur were to again reach 2003-2005 levels, CDA told Madibbo, the U.S. would be under great pressure to intervene strongly. Madibbo said that the current death rate in Darfur was sixty-five per day (half what it was some years ago), and that Darfuri culture was being ghettoized. He criticized what he described as the U.S.'s "hands-off" policy in Darfur. CDA countered, reminding Madibbo that the U.S. contributed 25 percent of the hybrid force funding, fed two million people each year, funded all the AMIS camps and was instrumental in pushing through UNSCR 1769 with a Chapter 7 mandate.

17. (SBU) Comment: A Baggara alliance, and especially one that joined

KHARTOUM 00001950 002 OF 002

with the Fur and Massalit, would undoubtedly be of grave concern to the Sudanese government, which has already lost much of its power and influence in South Darfur. With loyalties and allegiances in flux throughout the region, the decisions made by this large, well-armed and entrenched tribal alliance could lead to increased conflict, a weakened hold by the GOS on South Sudan, or GOS vengeance against "traitorous" Arab tribes. In such a volatile environment anything is possible: a new type of brutal war or a multi-ethnic alliance that could strengthen a move towards peace in Darfur. End comment.

FERNANDEZ